

Metropolitan Homelessness Commission Meeting

Friday, January 9, 2015
at the Sonny West Conference Center
700 2nd Avenue South

Present: Megan, Barry, Jason Holleman, Mary Rolando, Dayna Lovelady, Steve Samra, Wendell Segroves, Phil Duke, Diane Kuhn, Charles Strobel, Tom Turner, Marvin Cox, Ellen Zinkiewicz, Renee Pratt, Jim Harbison, Angie Thompson, Lt. Melzoni

Staff: Will Connelly, Deon Trotter, Judy, Tackett, Karri Simpson, Rhonda Pedley (MSS Finance Rep)

The meeting began at 9:33 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the November 7, 2014 Metro Homelessness Commission meeting were approved.

Financial Report and Budget

Rhonda Pedley reported that \$10,000 has been moved from the salary and fringe line. The budget kick-off for Metro Government is Wednesday, January 14th, at which point any changes to the budget that need to be made will be discussed.

Contract Reports

Diane Kuhn asked if there are any questions for the current contracts. Ellen Zinkiewicz wondered why the budget for the Guest House and Day center appears to be extremely under-budget. Rhonda Pedley responded that Metro Finance is still waiting to receive a few invoices from Room in the Inn.

Diane asked for Centerstone to clarify the “54 exits” listed on their report. Monique Hodison stated that 54 individuals have exited the CTI program since it first began and if they need additional help they can call in for support. Steve Samra then asked if any 90 day or other timeframe of follow-up is being completed after exit. Monique Hodison stated not at this time.

Director's Report

- **How's Nashville:** Will Connelly reported that 842 people, who meet the definition of chronic homelessness or are vulnerable, have obtained housing since June of last year, averaging about 44 people moving into housing per month. Housing retention for the last year has a success rate of 77%. Housing placement reports can be found on the How's Nashville website. With the Zero:2016 campaign, next steps include setting new monthly housing placement goals in order to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015 and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016.
- **Strategic Planning:** Thanks to a donation from the Frist Foundation, this process will start next month. Focus Strategies, a national group that help improve how communities respond to homelessness, will help bring together the efforts of the CoC, CoC administered programs, the Metro Homelessness Commission (MHC), and any others interested in solving homelessness. A kick off meeting to bring together the community regarding this process and why it is needed will be sometime in February or March. One of Focus Strategies first tasks will be to complete an assessment of the current homeless service system within Nashville, with the goal of developing an appropriate housing intervention strategy. Other focuses will include where funds should be appropriately spent, cost effectiveness of programs, etc. Once this assessment is completed, a

report of the findings and a recommended governance structure of the CoC and MHC will be presented.

- **CABHI:** The Commission applied and has received a federal grant, of 1.5 million over a 3 year period, for CTI case management. The grant is awarded from SAMSHA to the state and then down to Metro. A competitive process was held and three bids were received. This week Metro Procurement sent out an intent to award this grant to Park Center, with Mental Health Cooperative as a subcontractor. CTI case management will be provided to either veterans or people that meet the chronic definition of homelessness and are moving into permanent housing. Approximately 120 people per year will be served through this grant.

Charles Strobel stated that he would like a service design report, for this new program, at the March MHC meeting. Ellen Zinkiewicz asked if there is a sustainability plan for this funding after the 3 year grant ends. Will Connelly stated that it is possible we could reapply for this funding, as this grant opportunity has been around for a while.

- **Coordinated Entry and Assessment:**

The three goals of the CES are:

1. Move people quickly through the system and into housing, reducing the amount of time people spend finding out what they are eligible for;
2. Reducing the number of people that come into the homeless service system or shelter by having prevention programs upfront;
3. Improving data that help determine the need and demand.

This effort is corresponding with the strategic planning.

Other

- **Program Evaluation Subcommittee:**

Wendell Segroves reported that the committee is in the learning process, looking over current contracts and MHC goals.

- **Cold Weather Community Response Update:**

Judy Tackett reported that within the last few nights, Room in the Inn has done a wonderful job increasing the number of beds; Sara Lyons, Coordinator for the cold weather response has been actively monitoring the number of bed available. On the coldest night this past week, Wednesday, there was an 80% occupancy rate so Metro, which was on standby, did not open an overflow shelter. Outreach staff is working hard to get the word out about what the community plan is during the different levels. Communication between the community has improved greatly from last year. While efforts have been made for the past two months, a pet shelter for individuals and their pets has not been located. This is a huge barrier for future cold spells. The Downtown Library has opened its doors, allowing individuals to warm up inside; the library system has also helped share information about shelter available. MTA bus cards, to be used during level two or higher, have been handed out and used this week. The Mayor's office reports that there are warming busses today at Riverfront Park and the Farmers Market- which will move to Church Street Park this afternoon.

Megan Barry stated that an email was sent to Metro Council regarding pets and shelter and was wondering what the need is. Judy stated that while the supplies, including crates and food, has been collected, a space to house up to 14 people and 14 crates is still needed.

- **James Robertson Apartment Update:**

Norman Deep, Director of Rental Assistance at MDHA, presented. 105 residents at James Robertson Apartments have been asked to vacate and are given until April 21; the current owner of the complex has opted out of their HUD contract. The population within James Robertson is mostly elderly and disabled. MDHA met with residents on December 17th to inform them of the process and on December 29th packets were mailed out to residents to apply for/ensure eligibility for voucher assistance through MDHA. Within the packet was a list of landlords that will accept the voucher type, as well as a survey to determine service needs. MDHA has reached out to Needlink, Metro Social Services, and MHC to receive support. James Robertson Apartments was not in contract with MDHA, but rather had a federal contract with HUD.

Discussion regarding this process ensued. Topics included assistance to residents to fill out applications and packets, to which Metro Social Services has stepped up to help. A concern regarding the possibility of other properties not renewing their contracts was also discussed. Questions regarding priority through MDHA were brought up, however no priority will be given.

Diane Kuhn requested a follow-up be presented at the March meeting, detailing process status and how many people have been reached.

Annual Homeless Memorial and Moment of Silence

Wendell Segroves reported that there was a great turnout in community support. As of December 13, 56 individuals experiencing homelessness lost their lives this year. Flowers were put in the Cumberland River in their memory. Since December 13, additional lives have been lost.

Announcements

No announcements were made.

Public Hearing

- Duane Bone: He is upset because he hears a lot of talk about money being spent but doesn't see anything going on, including outreach in Madison, as well as so many people in need can't reach their case workers.
- Steve Ryder: He expressed displeasure with how the James Robertson sale and follow-up has occurred, feels mistakes were made. He also asked that we remember Richard Nash, who passed away recently.
- Jim Johnston: He is upset with the inaction of the MHC, MDHA, and other service providers. Wants the MHC to meet more often. He is also concerned with the police harassment of individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Lindsey Krinks: She is concerned about the loss of affordable housing, as well as the lack of new affordable units being built. Each week, less and less landlords are accepting Section 8 vouchers or are raising their rents. It doesn't matter how much outreach is done if there isn't any housing. She asked that that Commissioners do their jobs and help secure affordable housing for How's Nashville.
- Laurie Green: She is concerned that residents at James Robertson won't qualify for MDHA Section 8 vouchers due to their felony backgrounds. Outreach workers are sometimes able to place people in housing, who have large barriers, because of relationships they have built with landlords but she has already tried calling other landlords regarding unit for current residents at James Robertson and all have said no.
- Samuel Lester: He is concerned about the couples in camps that don't want to split up in order to go to a shelter during the winter cold spells. Feels that in order to get an accurate count of individuals experiencing homelessness in Nashville, we have to go beyond the annual point-in-

time count and hold another in the summer when individuals won't be in motels or warehouses to escape the cold. He is also concerned about the lack of affordable housing.

The next full Commission meeting is on Friday, March 6, 2015 at the Sonny West Conference room.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on Tuesday, February 17 at 8:30 a.m. at Metro Social Services.

With no other comments, all approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.